

Testimony
Submitted to the
Education Committee
March 1, 2023

TESTIMONY on Raised Bill No.1094 AN ACT CONCERNING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF READING MODELS OR PROGRAMS.

Good morning/afternoon Senator McCrory, Representative Currey, Representative McCarty, Senator Berthel, and Members of the Education Committee.

I am Dr. Alan Addley, Superintendent of Darien Public Schools. I am here today to comment on Raised Bill No. 1094. AN ACT CONCERNING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF READING MODELS OR PROGRAMS.

Superintendents across the state appreciate and agree with the State's prioritization and recognition that reading is critical to a child's education as evidenced in Public Act No. 21-2, Connecticut's Right to Read Legislation. We share the belief that all students in Connecticut have the "Right to Read" and reading on grade level by grade three is a prerequisite to future success in school. We agree that school districts should embrace the Science of Reading and have a literacy curriculum inclusive of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. We also appreciate the recent waiver process afforded by the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) that offers districts the opportunity to present reading curriculum for approval other than the seven approved programs approved by the State's Reading Council.

We support the delay in implementation provision included in Bill 1094 as it allows all districts, including those who are selecting to use one of the seven State approved programs, to thoughtfully plan for implementation of the legislation; however, should a District's waiver be denied, many superintendents do not agree with the mandate for districts to select one the seven approved programs.

In the event that a district's waiver is denied, I respectfully request Bill 1094 be further revised to ensure the CSDE uses the delayed implementation timeline to engage and partner with those districts in providing specific feedback on how their alternate reading curriculum is not evidence and scientifically based, and most importantly, provide those districts the opportunity to resubmit and/or revise and supplement their curriculum in the areas deemed deficient by the CSDE.

Thank you for your support of Bill 1094 in affording districts the opportunity to delay implementation and for your consideration of permitting this additional time be used by districts to develop programs at the local level that best support our youngest readers.

Thank you for your time.